The SERDP Funding Process

Overview: The Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP) is a statutory program to address the high-priority environmental needs of the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Energy (DOE). SERDP funds both federal and private organizations as well as international organizations to perform environmental research and development through a competitive process. There generally are two solicitations annually—a "Core" solicitation and a **SERDP** **E**xploratory **D**evelopment (SEED) solicitation to select projects to be funded in the next federal fiscal year. Proposals submitted in response to these solicitations do not require a DoD partner.

Core Solicitation: The Core solicitation normally is released in mid-November as both a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) to the non-federal (industry and academia) sector via the *Federal Business Opportunities* and a Call for Proposals to the federal sector.
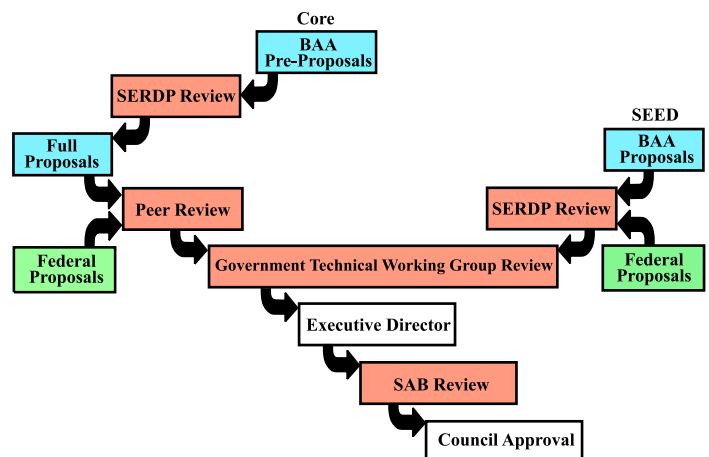
SEED Solicitation: The SEED program is designed to provide initial funding for high-risk, high-payoff proof-of-concept projects. Funding is limited to a maximum of $100,000 for up to one year. Projects that are successful in this first year will have the opportunity to compete for additional follow-on funding. The SEED solicitation is released in November to both federal and non-federal sectors.

Proposal Submission and Selection Process: SERDP uses a multi-step competitive process for Core proposals, illustrated at right, to select projects for funding. Statements of Need (SON) represent high-priority DoD requirements. Only proposals addressing the Statements of Need are reviewed. The BAA uses a pre-proposal process for the initial screening of projects because SERDP recognizes that there is a significant cost involved in writing a full proposal and, therefore, seeks to limit this effort to projects that are expected to be competitive. Federal sector proposals are submitted to SERDP as full proposals after each agency conducts an internal down select of proposals to those that are considered to be competitive in the final evaluation. Participating federal agencies are limited to submitting two full proposals per SON. All full proposals from both the BAA and the federal Call are simultaneously subjected to an external peer review.

Following the technical peer review, the top-ranked proposals in each SERDP Thrust Area are reviewed by panels of Government technical experts from the DoD, the DOE, and the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend specific proposals for funding. These recommendations may include funding only part of a proposal. Upon acceptance by the SERDP Executive Director, each of these proposals is required to make an oral presentation before the SERDP Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). This usually occurs in September or October of each year. Assuming a positive recommendation by the SAB, projects then receive formal approval by the SERDP Council. Federal performers should receive their funds in late December or early January. Private sector performers must go through the contracting process and should have funds available in April.

The SEED proposals go through a simplified selection process. They undergo an initial screening review at the SERDP Program Office. Meritorious proposals then are reviewed by multi-agency Government technical workgroups that make recommendations for funding to the SERDP Executive Director.

How to Write Successful Proposals: SERDP funds research and development that is not only of high scientific and technical quality, but also, if successful, will lead to cost-effective solutions or products. All SERDP proposals must respond to a high-priority DoD environmental requirement.

Details on each of these solicitations may be found on the SERDP web site (www.serdp.org).

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